

### REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed April 26, 2006, the examiner indicated that claims 3, 10, and 13-15 contain allowable subject matter and rejected the remainder of the claims. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration in light of the amendments and remarks presented in this reply.

#### I. Response to claim rejections

Claims 1, 2, 5-9, 11, 12, and 16-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0243699 ("Koclanes"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites a method for operating a storage volume that comprises "allocating or deleting a cluster". This feature of claim 1 provides various benefits over prior art systems such as improving the performance of storage systems and decreasing cost by efficiently utilizing system resources.

Koclanes does not teach or suggest this feature of claim 1. The only portion of Koclanes mentioning clusters is paragraph 53, lines 6-10. This portion teaches adding a new server to an already existing cluster. This portion also teaches cloning a volume mapping and network paths of existing servers in a cluster. None of these teachings correspond to allocating or deleting a cluster. Instead, these portions teach modifying characteristics associated with a single cluster. Modifying a characteristic of an already existing cluster does not correspond to allocating or deleting a cluster.

No other portions of Koclanes relate to the above-cited feature of claim 1. Although Koclanes teaches various methods of modifying characteristics of a storage system, all the characteristics modified are specific to a single cluster or to a unit of storage included in a single cluster. None of the modifications correspond to allocating or deleting a cluster. As such, Koclanes does not anticipate claim 1.

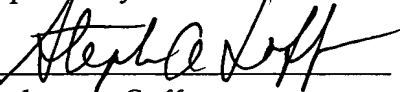
Koclanes does not anticipate claims 19 and 20 at least because each of these claims includes the feature discussed above. Claims 2, 5-9, 11, 12, and 16-18 are allowable over Koclanes at least because each of these claims depends from an allowable claim.

## II. Conclusion

In view of the above amendment, the applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance. If there are any formal matters remaining after this reply, the applicants respectfully request the examiner to telephone the undersigned. If there are any additional fees associated with the filing of this reply, including fees required under 35 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17, please charge them to deposit account number 04-1073.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

Stephen A. Soffen

Registration No.: 31,063

DICKSTEIN SHAPIRO MORIN &  
OSHINSKY LLP

1825 Eye St NW  
Washington, DC 20006-5403  
(202) 420-2200  
Attorneys for Applicant